

## THE BOOMING OF BONANZA PARK

## The Red Book.

The bottom had fallen out of the real estate boom and the flimsy but highly decorative entrance arch built in front of the Bonanza Subdivision was tottering in the ocean breeze. On the sites of the proposed courthouse, the intended railway station, the projected opera house and the all-but-commenced hotel lay large pools of salt water, and even the population of Bonanza, a flock of bedraggled sea-gulls, was growing smaller each day.

In the city office of the Bonanza Land Improvement Company, two high heaps of multi-colored pamphlets with an impressive view of the aforementioned arch on the front cover, surrounded by a rollicking flock of dollar marks, were gathering dust. On the uppermost booklet reposed two highly polished patent leather shoes. Continuing westward were two substantial legs in hellotrope socks. Farther west were more legs, a round waist line, and along the median line of a hellotrope vest and a ditto shirt, a necktie of the same hue terminated near the deep dimple in one of the two chins of Henry Hick Hudson, the father of Bonanza, the new "Paradise of the Pacific."

"Bonanza Hudson" stared blankly at the gilt letters on the windows of the big building opposite. Now and then he cast a worried glance at his peroxidized stenographer—who had not removed the tin cover of her machine, although it was almost noon. In her left hand she held a dog-eared paper novel and now and then she took a sudden bite from an orange, peel and all.

Mr. Hudson's gaze slowly wandered toward a map of the big subdivision which took up almost the whole east wall of the room. He smiled in a disgusted manner when his eyes met the crimson square indicating the site for the proposed Bonanza Union Depot, the green blotch of the proposed park, the blue serpentine bands of the surveyed-but-not-commenced canals. There were also romantic gondolas in water colors and birdseye views of palms with little set pieces like the trees in Noah's Ark.

"Say, Miss Layne, what do we owe for that sketch-map?" he asked with a sigh. The girl imbibed a quantity of orange juice, wiped her shapely lips with a sheet of Bonanza stationery and was about to reply when a rap fell on the door.

"If it's somebody with a bill, tell him I am busy in a directors' meeting," said Hudson.

"Of course," replied Miss Layne. "Wait a minute," Hudson further reminded her. "We pay all bills on the fifteenth of each month. See?"

"Hm, this is the fifteenth," replied the girl. "We'd better pay on each tenth."

Without waiting for a word of approval, she snatched the cover of the typewriter and ran into the outer office.

"That girl is wiser than she looks," chuckled Hudson, "and business college, at that."

Miss Layne returned to the room with a smile and handed her employer a card. The next instant she was making a noise like a hail-storm on her typewriter. She stopped for a moment to scatter a number of bonds, stock certificates, dummy deeds to lots in Bonanza and other important looking documents all over the table at her right. She did this so dextrously that, in not a single instance could the stamp "specimen," be seen on the apparent securities as they lay scattered conspicuously on the table.

"Never mind the flash this time," said Hudson, with a broad smile. "This fellow is no dead one. Look at his card."

He tossed the pasteboard over to the stenographer who read:

Will U. C. Jones  
Los Angeles, Cal.

Idea  
Furnished

"Will You See Jones? You bet, I will see any man who is alive enough to use that kind of a calling card," roared Hudson. "Show him in."

A large, fleshy man, whose enormous but demure face and childlike blue eyes proved somewhat different from what Hudson had expected, entered the room. After commenting upon the weather in general and western weather in particular, he settled slowly down in the wide, comfortable chair close to Hudson's right elbow.

Hudson pushed a box of cigars, with highly decorative bands, toward the visitor and removed one foot from the advertising matter long enough to let him strike a match on the sole of his shoe.

"That card takes my fancy, Mr. Jones," said Hudson. "Is that your own original idea?"

"Ahem," said Jones, with an apologetic cough, "I am full of such things." "That card gets you an audience every time, I bet," laughed Hudson.

not in," replied Jones, with a peculiar closing of one eyelid. "You see, my wife calls me Cluffy, but my name is really William Ulysses Clifford Jones."

Jones inspected the cigar slowly while Hudson inspected him.

Jones removed the band gingerly and deposited it in a little green tin box which he produced from his pocket.

"Mrs. Jones always wants me to save the bands, sir," he explained. "She pastes them on saucers, jugs, bottles, ash-trays, and things of that sort, sir."

Hudson was taken aback at the slow and laborious mannerisms of the caller.

"Well, what can I do for you, Mr. Jones?" he snapped.

"I have a fine idea for advertising Bonanza for you, sir," said Jones with a sudden start. "If you can use it, will you pay for it?"

"I am sorry, Bonanza is all sold out. Every lot is gone. There is no need of advertising it any more."

Miss Layne coughed hard.

Jones looked as if he wanted to return the unsmoked portion of the cigar, and rose to go. Hudson stared hard at him. Jones underwent a sudden change and settled back in the chair.

"Well," he said, "I didn't know that Bonanza was selling as fast as all that."

"Why?" demanded Hudson.

"Because," said Jones, gently, "when I was paying teller of the bank in one of the beach towns, an agent came out there and could not sell a foot, or rather, a gallon of it. One man went out to look at the lots and came back with wet feet and a bad cold, stating that the only way to see that kind of real estate is to wear a diver's suit."

"Well, Mr. Jones, there has been a little water on some of the property, but we have had pretty high tides lately," replied Hudson languidly.

"Say, what do they expect for seven hundred dollars per lot, anyway? Ten dollars down and the balance easy."

Jones' face almost exploded in a scattering, but noiseless laugh and settled back instantly.

"You may go to lunch, Miss Layne," said Hudson. "Mr. Jones, I would like to have a heart to heart talk with you, and we will lunch together when my—my stenographer returns."

"Say, Jones, were you really paying teller in that bank?" asked Hudson, in an undertone, as soon as the door had closed behind the girl.

"Why, of course not," said Jones, with a broad smile. "No, sir."

"Cut out that 'sir' business," admonished Hudson. "I have sized you up. You are a live wire and a first class make-believer. You are on all right, all right."

"Sure," laughed Jones. "But I never unravel in front of strange stenographers."

"Fine policy, that," chuckled Hudson. "But Miss Layne is all right, and she is there with the bluff every time. No, old man, Bonanza is as dead as a door-nail. But that is between you and me. Subdividing is done to death and I am looking for other pastures to force a nice green dollar crop. Just look across the street. In great, big letters you can read for yourself the names of six development companies, twelve sandlot paradises, two new ideal cemeteries with southern exposures and a fine view of the ocean. It's time for something different than submarine real estate. I am looking for something strong, something stirring, something—"

"Something with new talking points, strong directors, and special selling ideas," added Jones, now completely transformed. "I think I know something that will interest you. I will furnish the ideas, you contribute the expenses, circumference and vocabulary."

"Isn't that funny, Jones," said Hudson. "I notice that all good promoters are well provided with embonpoint. What is your weight 'on the hoof,' Jones?"

"Two hundred twenty, live weight." "And I am two-forty. Hm, four hundred and sixty pounds pressure ought to count. Well, let us see what ideas we can use this pressure on."

"Let us incorporate something and sell stock," said Jones.

"Holy smoke," gasped Hudson. "Is that your most brilliant scheme? Don't you suppose I have thought of that?"

"Naturally," replied Jones. "But there are stocks and stocks. Besides, you overlooked the fact that I am a man of ideas."

"I have not seen anything extra bright emanating from your brain, as yet," laughed Hudson, "but, of course, we have only known each other ten minutes."

Jones removed his coat, helped himself to another cigar, threw the band in the waste basket this time, kicked his feet up in close proximity to Miss Layne's orange, and said:

"The panic put a lot of good things asleep. I have a list of hot propositions lying in a comatose state waiting for revival."

"Say, pardon my interrupting you, Jones, but where is your office?" asked Hudson.

"Right here, if you like," answered Jones, slapping the desk with a hand as large as an apple pie. "Bonanza is not in bad, is it?"

"No, because we haven't sold any of it yet," explained Hudson. "We were just ready for the big splash."

He had a small wood and far paper

arched portal erected at the proposed main entrance from the boulevard (that was to come), and I can tell you it looked great if you did not walk around on the other side of it. You have seen the printed dope on our 'Paradise of the Pacific,' of course?"

Jones held up both hands.

"Sure," he said. "It's a lovely dream. But the bottom has fallen out of the whole shebang. How much are you to-the-bad on the deal?"

"To-the-bad? We are not built that way. We are to-the-good to the extent of about three weeks more rent in advance on these offices, one installment on the rugs and one on the desk. The printers do not collect until the next tenth, according to my stenographer, and we have no current debts. Rest easy on that score. I owe myself some salary, however. Five hundred per."

"Per what?" echoed Hudson. "But just look at the front we make here."

"Who is we?" inquired Jones, gaining in familiarity.

"We? Why, the Bonanza Land Improvement Company; Mrs. H. H. Hudson, president; Mr. H. H. Hudson (that's me), secretary and treasurer; Miss Layne, vice-president; the lawyer who incorporated us (I forget his name just now, but he is over in the Chamber of Commerce Building), is a director, and Mr. Love, the gent who advanced the real money—a thousand for preliminary and incorporation expenses—is another director. He is about eighty and deaf. Mrs. Hudson gathered him in at one of those church lawn-fetes. He had to be convinced through a tin ear-trumpet and was closed up over a dish of limp vanilla ice cream. He won't wake up for months yet. Mrs. Hudson is now in charge of the salvation department, or something of that kind, in the congregation, and he is treasurer."

"Fine," exclaimed Jones. "What is the matter with using Love, Esq., a little more. Wait till I get a good, melodious ear-trumpet. Or does the dear land carry his own megaphone? As soon as we know what to incorporate, I must join that church and lay in a supply of some black neckties and a Prince Albert."

"That's the only thing," said Hudson, with great seriousness. "We should never be too busy to think of our spiritual welfare."

"Bet your life, Mr. Hudson."

"By the way, how much money have you, Mr. Jones?" asked Hudson suddenly.

"Oh, I can carry myself until my first deal," replied he, trying to conceal his embarrassment. "We live at the swellest apartment house in town and we are good for twenty days more rent, and we are on a similar footing at the grocery and the meat market. And as this is walking distance, I need no car fare. Oh, I am all right."

"Adding what you have and the twenty dollars I have, we stand about twenty dollars and a half in real money," replied Hudson, writing the figures on a defunct, or rather, never born, deed to a Bonanza lot. "I am fixed the same way at home."

"You hit the amount in my case within a quarter," laughed Jones. "Do you own anything in the Bonanza tract?"

"Not a pebble. It was to be a case of release as we sold with deed furnished by the owner. Same old gag, you know."

Jones nodded.

"I have several good things in mind," resumed the man of ideas, after a brief interval. "I will read you a few."

Consulting a small red note book, he read:

"Sleeping gold mine—fine assay certificates—not much in debt—strong dummy directors—one of them a prominent politician—already incorporated—ten millions—property Nevada. We can get sixty per cent. commission and a bale of non-pooled stock. Stockholders all over the West, but they won't boost. All are sore as blazes."

"Drop that," said Hudson. "Next." "Mud deposit—fine dope—imitation of that medical mud they sell for squeaky throats and so forth—deposit discovered by alcoholic Indian chief—found his pony with some legs very now and then sticking in the mud and he is healing up to beat thunder. Can be retailed for one dollar per pound and costs about five cents—labor, label, can and all. How is that?"

"Put that to one side," was Hudson's verdict. "It may prove a good thing a little later. But I want some real, quick money. Any others?"

"Copper mine—Arizona—can easily be made to look like adjoining property to United Verde of Senator Clark."

"Cut out the old chestnut of adjoining-Clark, adjoining-Calumet Hecla or just-like-Bell-Telephone," snapped Hudson. "Give us something square."

"Pardon me, what was that you said?" asked Jones, closing the book playfully.

"You know what I mean."

"Sure. Well, here is a pippin. We can get a twenty million dollar cement proposition not far from here. I see there has been fifty actual dollars paid down on the option—chance for big holding corporation—subsidary construction company, steam railway, wharf and steamship line as well as electric car line."

"That is a whopper as soon as we can get a few dollars to rattle with,"

said Hudson. "Will it keep fresh another month?"

"Anything will keep just now," said Jones. "Money is not quite loose again since the panic. Just wait, here is the best yet. Just what we need and it fits right into the Bonanza. By the way, I take it for granted that you have control of this Bonanza Land Improvement Company?"

"Of course," said Hudson. "Mrs. Hudson and I own two-thirds of the capital stock."

"And your charter provides for what?"

"Almost anything, from owning and handling real-estate to running a balloon race. The purpose clause is three typed pages long."

Jones stepped over to the typewriter, and after operating the machine with great dexterity for a few minutes, pushed the result over to Hudson, who read:

Bonanza Park  
In the Redwoods!  
The Ideal Camping Resort of the Wonderful Sierras  
Opens June 1.

Lots given away. Free—free—free. To all those who suggest acceptable names for the Avenues, Boulevards and Public Squares in Bonanza Park, the Bonanza Land Improvement Company will present one 25 by 125 foot lot for each name accepted. It costs you nothing to send in a suggestion. We do this to create interest in our magnificent new subdivision in the foothills. Water, fine roads, unexcelled view of the ocean, proposed electric line and enough redwood lumber on each lot to build a fine bungalow.

Hudson read the outlined advertisement, and smiled approvingly at Jones.

"This is all very well," he said, "but where is this Bonanza Park?"

"Oh, almost anywhere," replied Jones, with a sweep of his hand. "I can get vertical mountain land anywhere south of Frisco at a few dollars an acre. Suppose we agree to pay ten dollars an acre, cut each acre up into from twelve to fourteen lots, that means about 85 cents per lot to us. Eh?"

"Yes, I follow."

"If we get a gross profit of seven or eight hundred per cent, how would that strike you?"

"You know the answer. Go ahead dreaming."

"The outline surveying, stereotyped deeds, 'literature'—no mail or newspaper advertising at all—will bring the cost per lot to about one dollar and fifty cents each. We get from six dollars and up, with the accent on the 'up' for each lot."

"Well, it listens good, Jones. Fire away. But to survey and get the map accepted by the county supervisors takes time. I don't see any money in it for a month. It is the old stunt of giving lots away for nothing and charging a certain price for the necessary papers, I suppose?"

"Precisely, Mr. Hudson. But the old trick will appear in a new and magnificent plumage and they won't recognize it. You see, they get the lots because of their talent and good taste. We merely get a bale of circulars out, and before the ink on them is dry we will have suggestions galore. You prepare the printed matter, and long before it is ready I will pick a nice, suitable piece of virgin wilderness. The dollar influx starts at once. You can use your old Bonanza stationery and you will only have to add four letters to your door: P-A-R-K. We accept all suggestions, of course, and give away as many lots as possible. A whirling noise on the typewriter resulted in this:

We take pleasure in notifying you that your suggestion has been accepted by our board of directors and has met with the approval of our art committee. You are entitled to a choice of any unsold lot in Bonanza Park, in the Redwoods. Bring this card with you to our office within twenty-four hours and select your property from the map. The only stipulation we make is that you will not offer your lot for sale at less than One Hundred and Fifty Dollars for a period of one year from date.

Yours truly,  
Bonanza Land Improvement Co.

After Hudson had perused and approved of this "copy" for post cards to be sent to all suggesters, Jones went on:

"We don't know where Bonanza Park is just now, but that does not matter. Simply give contracts for deeds and collect in advance. They don't look gift horses in the mouth. Few people are going to let go their hold on a fancy lot by refusing to pay for the papers. We will have to get a skate notary with a big, gilt seal, to work here for about eight per week."

"And what amount do we collect in each case?" asked Hudson.

"All we can get," replied Jones. "I am on. I know I should not ask so many hopeless sounding questions, but there is nothing like knowing the plans of our business."

"Of course," replied Jones, gravely. "There is nothing like having a fixed business principle. I am a stickler for principle."

"Hm, so I see. I guess we'd better go to lunch. I can hear Miss Layne out there now."

"I prefer lunching at home today. I promised Mrs. Jones I would. She gets peevish rather easily."

"The lunch is on me today," smiled Hudson.

"That's different," remarked Jones,

"I am with you. I will leave you for an hour or so after lunch and at three o'clock I will be back here and let you know in what part of the world Bonanza Park is located."

Sunburned and attired in a khaki suit, Jones entered the busy-looking offices a few days later. Blue prints, maps, bids from cement, sewer and street-grading contractors, and other business-like documents were scattered conspicuously on a table in the other room. Logs of red-wood leaned against the walls of both rooms.

A surveyor's transit, without lenses, but business-like, stood on a sprawling tripod in the most prominent place. The word "Park" had been freshly painted below the word "Bonanza" on the other door. Miss Layne had an assistant and the hellotrope portions of Mr. Hudson's raiment had been exchanged for similar garments of delicate, pearl-gray tints. Jones walked painfully into the inner office and closed the door behind him.

"Great Scott, what a place! But I finally got up there," he said as he shook Hudson's hand with his right and took three cigars with his left. "Bonanza Park" will be all right when the airships become more popular. We had to rest our horses twelve times on the way up and the last mile we climbed on all fours. There is not a level spot there, just gulches and ravines."

"Well, think of the view," reminded Hudson. "Did you get any photographs?"

"Not there. The photo man refused to risk his life and his camera. But we took some fine pictures a couple of miles this side of our property. They will make the new prospectus look like a house afire. There are 380 acres, level measure, but I should judge it amounts to twenty times that much, surface measure. The best lot I could see is almost vertical and would require a house with about ten stories on one side and one story on the other. The only way any one can camp there is to use hooks. It is rustic all right, all right. My lunch-basket fell from 'Court House Square' across 'Washington' and 'Roosevelt' avenues and didn't stop until it struck the proposed site of the Bonanza Water Works."

"You know a flat city is very monotonous," smiled Hudson. "How is the old farmer?"

"He is a cold blooded citizen for your whiskers. He is as tickled to get seven dollars per acre as we are to sell it," replied Jones. "Why, he was going to let the land go for non-payment of taxes since a forest fire cleaned out every stick of timber."

"Well, business has been roaring while you were out exploring," said Hudson, cheerfully. "Say, just gaze upon this. About seventy members of my wife's church suggested names, and would you believe me, they all won lots. They are going like hot-cakes and we expect the whole Sunday-school batch in tomorrow with suggestions. I find we won't have streets enough on that map to go around, so I have added a clause in the suggestion agreement whereby we reserve the right to use accepted names in some of our future enterprises."

"Certainly," nodded Jones. "Of course we are only beginning. And, after all," he added, "I don't know but what it is well worth six or eight dollars to have a spot you can feel is your own and throw out your chest and call yourself a property owner."

At this point the telephone rang. Hudson answered and pushed the receiver over to Jones.

"Mrs. Jones is coming up here," Jones said with a queer gulp. "She wants to know why I didn't go straight to the house after three days' absence. Instead of coming up to the office. She says I don't love her any more and that Bonanza Park is now my affinity. She is down stairs in the drug-store."

Hudson rose quickly, and put on his coat, dusted off his patent leathers and turned a brewery art calendar to the wall.

A few minutes later, Mrs. Jones entered and fell upon her husband, who received her dainty burden of one hundred and fifty pounds as a matter of fact while dodging two long hat pins. After an effusive and tearful greeting Mrs. Jones attempted to bestow an expensive smile upon Mr. Hudson through a veil misty with tears. That gentleman, however, suddenly recalled an engagement with a man somewhere and with a wink at Jones, left the office. Mrs. Jones now rapidly regained her composure, removed her hat and stared at her husband, who sat opposite her, with an expression of calm resignation.

"Oh, Cluffy, Cluffy, Cluffy," began the lady. "How could you do it? Here I sit in a stuffy furnished flat and worry and worry while you go picnicking in that beautiful park."

"Very be-ootiful park," echoed Jones with a smile which his wife did not appear to note. "But, dearie, it was no picnic. It was work. Look at my clothes, shoes and hands. I should have come straight home, but preferred to wait until after dark. I will have to go through the alley even now."

"Is it lovely up there, Cluffy?"

"Heavenly," replied Jones with an elevated gaze.

"You must take me along next time in an automobile. Call at the house for me with a big red machine and 'honk' hard so that all the neighbors will come to the windows."

"Well, I will as soon as the streets and boulevards of Bonanza Park are asphalted," replied Jones as he walked around the desk and kissed his wife tenderly. "Yes, dearie, it will be nice. We will take our lunch along."

"There is one thing, Cluffy, I want

you to tell me," said Mrs. Jones earnestly. "Do you believe this proposition is a good and square thing? You know I don't want you to do anything wicked. Mr. Hudson is very loud in his attire and rather, hm—sporty looking."

"Square? Why, dearie, how could it be otherwise?"

"But I saw in some printed matter which I found in your pockets that you value the lots at one hundred and fifty dollars each. Are they really worth it?"

"Oh, several times as much," replied Jones buoyantly. "Several times as much, and the corner lots especially. Those lots along Alifafa Boulevard are cheap at seven hundred. Yes, indeed."

"Why don't we get some for ourselves?"

Jones staggered mentally.

"Well, you see, it wouldn't be right for us to suggest names and get lots for the mere cost of the paper," he explained. "We do that to outsiders only so that they will afterwards recommend the lots to others at from one hundred and fifty to seven hundred dollars each."

"What is the best price we can get them at ourselves?" asked Mrs. Jones. "You know, Mr. Hudson told me that you are making about a hundred and seventy-five dollars a day now."

"Yes, and will soon be making five hundred a day," he replied. "I should say that one hundred dollars per lot would be a fair inside price. I would be tickled to get a few at one hundred myself."

"We will be rich some day, Cluffy."

"Say, by the way, dearie," Jones made haste to interpolate. "I will be home early this afternoon and will bring you considerable cash. I want to keep it in the house instead of in the bank. I'll tell you why later. I know it'll be quite safe with you."

"Yes, Cluffy," said Mrs. Jones, and bade her husband a clinging and tender goodbye.

When Hudson returned, shortly afterwards, he found Jones gloomily staring at his torn leggings and muddy boots.

"Did you get rid of the madam?" his partner asked.

"Yes, but say, Hudson, I had to boost this thing up to beat the band," was Jones' rejoinder. "I wouldn't have a moment's peace at home if I let her in on the facts. She knows nothing about our financial aerial glides. She is one of those who read 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'"

"I gave her a strong talk when she was here the other day," replied Hudson. "She was a little worried, but went away a full-fledged, double-action, self-winding, automatic booster for Bonanza Park. She's safe."

"You told her I had made lots of money?"

"So you have. A bunch of lots to that church crowd and about three hundred others brought in from all over. We average seven-fifty per lot and after all expenses are paid, there is about fourteen hundred dollars for each of us, even now. That is going considerably."

Hudson removed a large roll of bills from his desk and divided it carefully.

"Besides this, there is enough of a balance in the bank for office expenses," he explained. "Miss Layne has it all down to the penny. If I were you I'd always keep that money where I could get at it, quick."

"I just said as much to my wife," replied Jones. "She'll keep it in the house."

"Certainly, but not in a tea-pot, behind the clock, or in the family Bible."

That night, all the way home, Jones pinched his inside vest pocket every few steps, only to feel, each time, a soft, resilient resistance which gave him thrills of unspeakable joy. He bought a box of fine cigars, and a yard-long ostrich plume for Mrs. Jones. She was singing in the kitchen when he arrived. He tip-toed through the flat into the bedroom and quietly put on his smoking jacket and slippers. Then he removed a huge safety pin from the top of his bulging vest pocket and proceeded to cover the bed spread, crazy-quilt fashion, with green and yellow money. It was chiefly in small bills and he had to use a part of the sofa. After surmounting the bed pillows with the plume, he whistled and called for "Dearie."

Pirotting coyly from the kitchen, with an egg beater in one hand and a quantity of pie crust dough on the other, Mrs. Jones appeared.

"How long have you been home, Cluffy?" she exclaimed. "Naughty, naughty, to sneak in like a little wee burglar!"

Before Jones could reply her gaze fell upon the bed. She emitted one wild shriek and after revolving a few times, indulged in one of her special, but not perilous swoons.</